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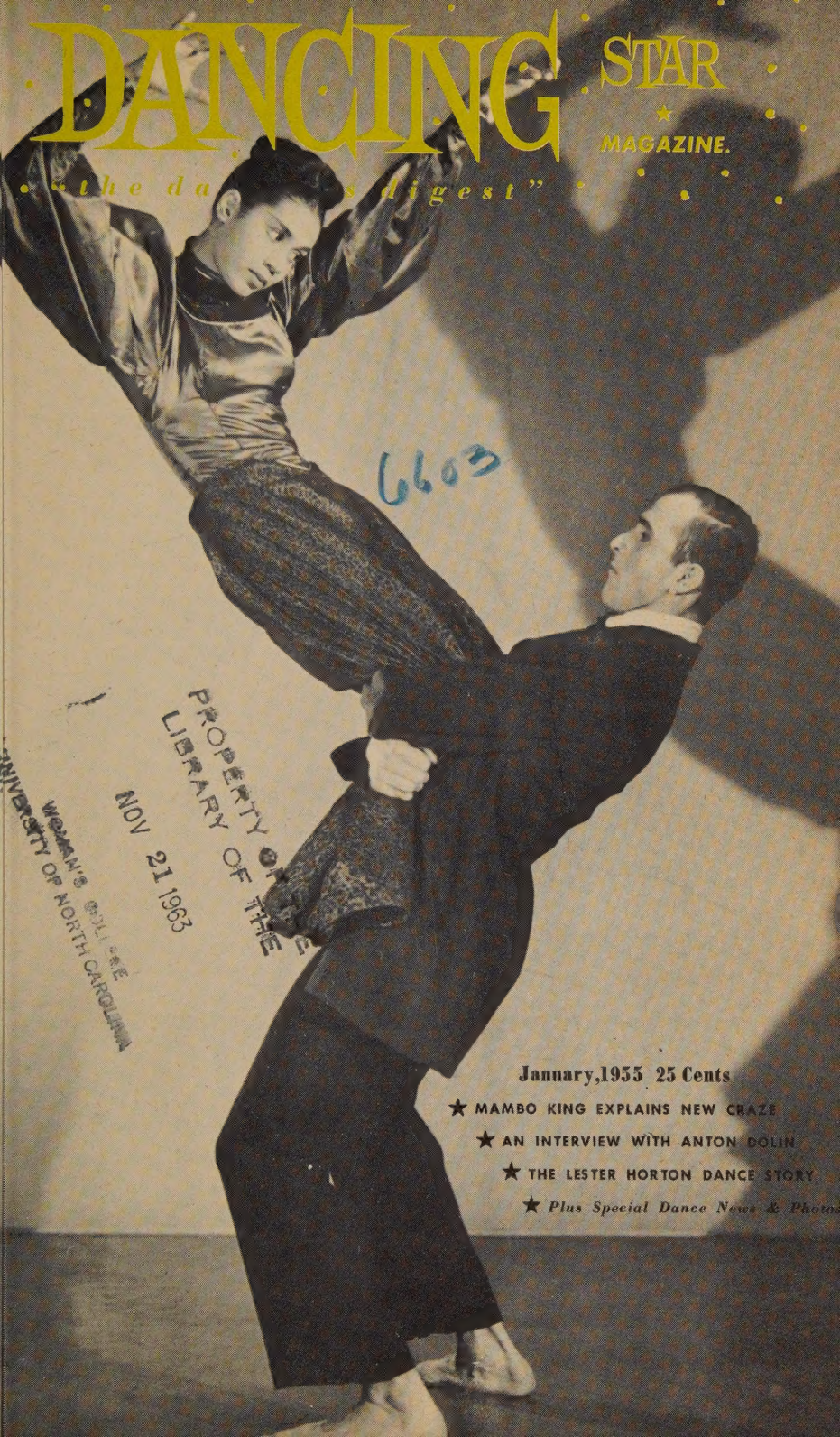

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★ THE LESTER HORTON DANCE STORY

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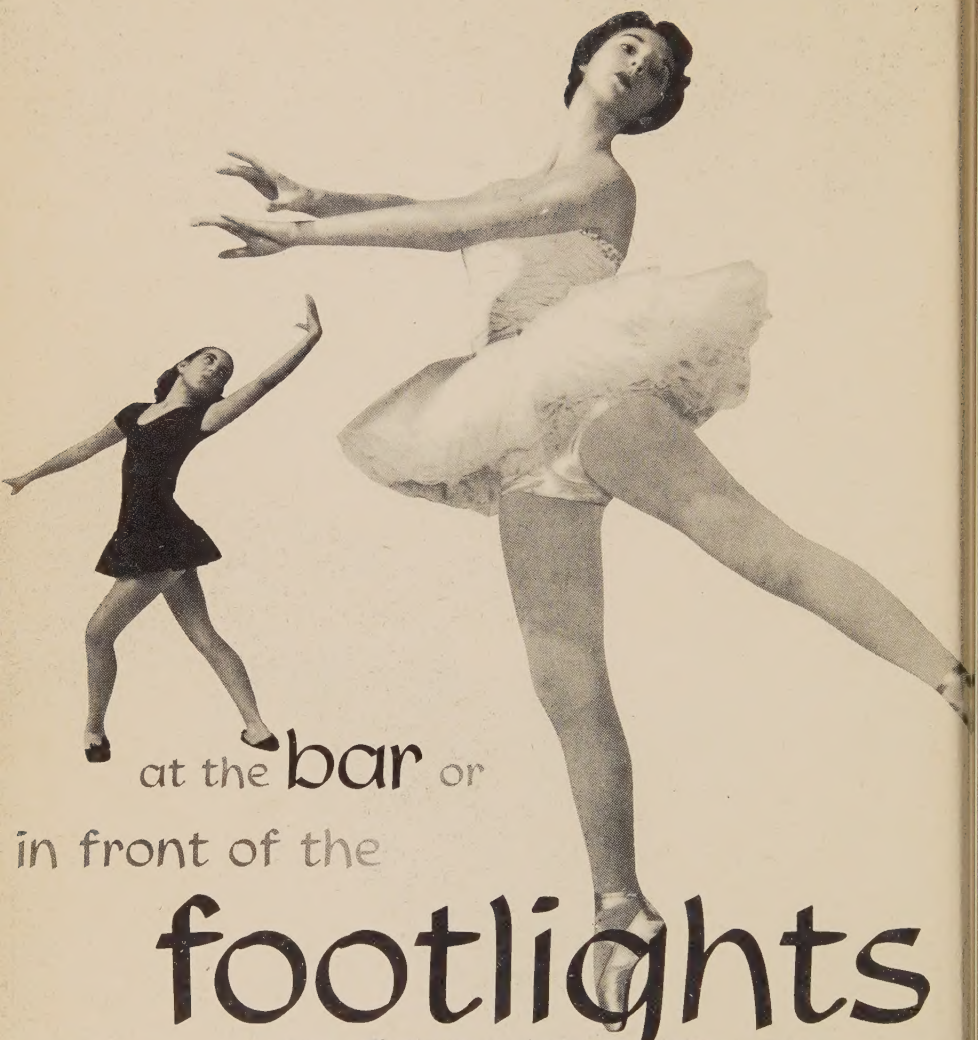

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THE COVER:

Carmen de Lavallade and Jack Dodds in the 'Choreo '53' revival of the powerful Horton duo, 'The Beloved', a dramatic projection of a theme uppointing Victorian morality.

—Constantine

The Lester Horton Dance Story

AUBREY B. HAINES

Over at 7566 Melrose Avenue in Los Angeles you will find the Lester Horton Dance Theatre and School, the only permanent theatre in the western hemisphere devoted exclusively to choreographic art. It is a small auditorium with only 133 seats. But its dance productions have built up such a consistent following that the organization has been able to perform a single program for six and eight months of week-end performances. Furthermore, it has won the attention and esteem of the Los Angeles press, which reviews each new production.

Needless to say, this group did not spring up overnight. For the past twenty-five years the late Lester Horton, its founder, proved himself a prolific creative artist. In the vanguard of modern dance in America, he consistenly did choreography for the concert stage as well as for the commercial fields. His works ranged from the epic (he had 100 dancers in his 1938 Hollywood Bowl version of Stravinsky's *The Rite of Spring*) to the intimate. His impressive dance duo, *The Beloved*, one of his definitive works, was an example of the latter. And his choreography led him in addition through musical comedy and operatic stagings in films, television and nightclub acts.

Lester Horton's own background was eclectic, drawing as it did on varied training and catholic interests. His earliest training was a stint as designer and stage manager for the Indianapolis Civic Theatre, the city of his birth. Attending the Indianapolis Ballet School, where he received his first taste of formal dance study, Lester Horton soon abandoned it for brief study with Adolph Bolm and Andreas Pavely in Chicago.

An adventurous and inventive spirit led him immediately into an impassioned study of the North American Indian dance, and his research carried him to Indian reservations where he studied the dance in its original and primitive forms. By his late teens and early twenties Horton was considered an authority on the North American Indian dance. Indeed, it was this research and study which actually brought him to Los Angeles, where he was commissioned to stage an open-air Indian spectacle. This was followed by large works requiring from forty to sixty dancers, performed at the Los Angeles Philharmonic and the Shrine Auditoriums.

The influence of North American Indian dancing remained with Lester Horton throughout his career. One of his first works presented at the Dance Theatre back in 1948 was his *Totem Incantation.* A thirty-minute work choreographed for full company, it was based on Indian puberty and marriage rites.

Once in Los Angeles, Horton turned to study with Michio Ito, joining his company for two seasons. At the time Ito had just concluded his collaborations with Jacques Dalcroze in Europe and was attracting a wide following in this country. Combining the Dalcroze system with traditional Japanese forms and theatre conventions, Ito's work had a profound effect on Horton. Direct contact with the theatre of the Orient naturally enriched Horton's creative work and his approach to the theatre in general. The visible results were readily seen in his extension of the Japanese theory of organic usage of props to the dynamics of dance. ☛

Carnival Time in Rio. Left to right: Val Goodrich, Joyce Trisler and Misaye Kawasumi in Lester Horton's adaptation of the spirited, Brazilian 'Frevo'.

—Constantine

The late Lester Horton, choreographer for the Seymour Nebenzal production, 'Atlantis', illustrates a dance step to Milada Mladova, former member of the Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo, who has the second feminine lead in Maria Montez-Jean Pierre Aumont-Dennis O'Keefe starrer.

256324

Teaching and gathering successive groups of dancers around him, Lester Horton was soon in demand for film work. Between 1942 and 1953 he racked up some seventeen major film dance credits which ranged from tailoring dances around a personality, such as Yvonne de Carlo for "*Salome, Where She Danced*", through primitive works ("*White Savage*") to the staging of the operatic spectacle in "*Phantom of the Opera*".

A brief flurry in the East put Horton on a Bennington summer project which had him creating dances for the ill-fated Broadway musical, "*Shootin' Star*". (It should be noted in passing, however, that the dances were unanimously praised by the critics.) Afterward he returned to Los Angeles and with three associates founded the Dance Theatre in 1946. He purchased their interests a few years later and became sole owner.

After two long years of groundwork the quartet staged their first production in 1948. It consisted of Horton's third reworking of the *Salome* theme, *Totem Incantation*, and the tour de force, *The Beloved*. Throughout the following years Horton's activities were consistently sprinkled with such diversions as the staging of Earl Carroll's Theatre-Restaurant revues, the Los Angeles Greek Theatre's musicals, intimate commercial reviews — such as *Tongue in Cheek* as well as a series of dances for television.

The genesis and nature of Horton's dance group is governed by the academy principle. That is to say, with rare guest performers as exceptions, the dancers are products of intensive Horton training, often from childhood. It is interesting to note, however, that Horton disliked certain implications of the term "academy principle". By it is meant the sort of guiding theory of operations of such institutions, say, as the Moscow Art Theatre or the Sadler's Wells. Here an organized body of teachings is taught according to a predetermined aesthetic or cultural premise. At the same time out of the academy is drawn the performing talent, trained in the technics, style and aesthetic intentions of the organization. Essentially this is what the Lester Horton School and Dance Theatre have done.

However, few, if any dancers could perform in the style of the Horton troupe without specific training in Horton technics and some familiarity and sympathy with Horton premises. What Lester Horton disliked relative to the term "academy principle" is that it also implies the rigidity, regimentation, and usual lack of creative approach insofar as most such organizations are concerned. In this regard, Lester Horton, unlike some modern dancers, did *not* turn out a group of little Hortons. On the contrary, each performing artists was an individual in his own right and was encouraged to become so.

The choreographer prided himself on the fact that his technic was not a subjective, personalized affair. Rather it was a broad, thorough, and profound regiment of training that leaves style and individual expression up to the performing artist — a true technic in that it equips the performer without dictating.

The concert creations of the Dance Theatre are but the latter day expressions of Horton's prolific expression. With his earlier group, which performed from 1937 to 1941, he built up a similar

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repertory of major dance works which veteran Horton fans insist are unparalleled.

In the spring of 1953, for the first time in his lengthy career, Horton took the core of his troupe for a full-scale concert debut in New York. The company of eight, headed by Carmen de Lavallade, the brilliant young soloist, traveled with a full repertory selected from past seasons and including a new major work. Performing twice at the Kaufmann Auditorium of the Young Men's and Young Women's Hebrew Association, one of the troupe's most interesting dances was "*The Face of Violence*".

This new production was the fifth reworking of the *Salome* theme by Horton. Using the Freudian approach in dance terms to the motivations and psychic conflicts of Salome, it projected her as a willful young princess, half-child, half-woman — the hothouse product of a decadent court. The dance action followed her seduction of the guard over the prophet, her rejection by the latter, her machinations to win her way by beguiling the king over the shrewish objections of the queen, with the entire dire sequence of events subtly egged on by the eunuch and capped by Salome's dance with a scarf, symbol of the prophet's head.

The Horton company, aside from the youth of its members, also has the distinction of being one of the rare interracial groups in existence. Miss de Lavallade, for instance, is of New Orleans Creole-French-Indian stock and is probably the first member of her race to dance classic roles such as Salome and Yerma. Misaye Kawasumi, a Nisei, is still in her teens, and Horton predicted a fine dancing future for her. Like Miss Kawasumi, Leila Goldoni, of Italian extraction, studied with Horton from childhood and at sixteen years of age was rated by him as one of his dancing "finds" of all time. The remainder of the company, including the leading male dancer, James Truitte, are of diverse origins and backgrounds, but their common characteristics are youth and love of dancing.

With the company's performing regularly at its own theatre, on televison, and in films, a recodifying of the latest developments in Horton's technics and pedagogy is now under way. The body of dance technics, exercises and stretches, combinations that make up "Horton technics", is large and varied. Horton's technics underwent constant mutation, improvement, and refinement throughout the years. Now they are being reviewed, recorded on paper (they will eventually be filmed), and general organizing is being done of all of the technics as far back as the dances and teachers can remember. These. when all gathered, recorded, and collected, will eventually form the basis of a volume on Horton technics, complete with text and photographs.

(PART ONE OF TWO PARTS)

THE MAMBO !

1. Transfer weight to L.F. Relax R. knee inwards. 2. Place R.F. back, then transfer weight. 3. Rock forward on L.F. 4. Place R.F. beside L. —*STEPS FOR LADIES*

BASIC STEP. Start with feet side by side about 8 inches apart.

Transfer weight to R.F. Relax L. knee inwards. Place L.F. forward, then transfer weight. Rock back on R.F. Place L.F. beside R. —*STEPS FOR MEN*

MAMBO KING EXPLAINS NEW CRAZE . . .

by LYDIA HINDE

MAMBO ! Mambo ! The new-style music is being heard more and more in Britain. It's causing people to want to dance to it. But shuffling and hip-wriggling are simply not enough. People know that, but, to date, precious little guidance has been forthcoming as to how to respond to Mambo music . . .

Meanwhile, there's an insatiable interest in it all. When, only a week or two back, several charming English girls were introduced to American servicemen, to whom they'll act as guides to all things British, their pretty heads full of data about museums, citizens' advice bureaux and much else too, first question the G.I.'s asked was: "They look fine—but CAN THEY DO THE MAMBO ?"

All over the States this Mambo craze is intensifying. It has gripped people of all classes, all age-groups. And now, as the fascinating rhythm is more and more heard in Britain, people want to know what lies behind it all . . .

MAMBO WEDDING

PEREZ PRADO, known in many lands as "King of the Mambo", is said to have borrowed the fast-paced rhythm from native sugar workers, adapted it in various ways, and applied it to set the feet of millions of Americans a-dancing. And country after country is falling to the allure of the same musical appeal. Since he composed his first Mambo in 1943, King Prado has put out, in all, the enormous total of 202 Mambos, one of which, the celebrated Mambo Jambo, has sold well over two million records.

Some call Mambo a melodic wedding of hot jive and Rumba. King Prado calls it "music with blood in it—hot blood !" He was told, even in Cuba, that he must be crazy to try to popularise anything resembling Mambo. But he knew that people in many lands were crying out for "a new beat". He thought Mambo was IT ! Is he right ? Seems so in America, at least . . .

Foot-stamping, blood-stirring rhythm of the sugar-workers of Cuba has given to American dance bands what experts over there describe as "a much-needed shot in the arm".

That's not all. Quite apart from the dance-music side, there are indications of triumph for the Mambo in the ballrooms.

ALL-IN APPEAL

Staid Wall Street brokers who've

Spanish dancers, Antonio and Luisa Triana, have been cast in a Warner Bros. picture titled 'Strange Lady in Town.'

The father-daughter team will dance the 'Farruca', a Spanish folk dance in the movie which stars Greer Garson and Dana Andrews.

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never danced a step since they were teenagers, are being lured on to the floor by Mambo music. Man who produces so much of this music, the Mambo King himself, says "I write something new in music every day. I try to put down something different. When I succeed in doing that, I feel I am alive."

He's a small man, and people often think he looks like Napoleon. He moves about rapidly in front of his own band. "DILO!" he cries. That's local Cuban for "Say It!" He insists upon repeating a number over and over again if necessary until his band really can SAY IT in such a way that what the band says is felt by the people sitting around, and on to the floor they feel they must go—to answer rhythmically what the band is saying.

The meaning of the word Mambo? It cannot be precisely translated into English, in which respect it resembles Rumba and Samba. Nearest you can get is "Shake It". Those two words are regarded by some, including King Prado himself, as the key to the Mambo on the dance-floor.

His earnings are terrific. But he says: "Money doesn't worry me. Each day I live for itself alone, and for music, music, music. And never a day passes but I look for something new."

•

NOTE: For an interesting article and interview on Perez Prado see the January 1952 DANCING STAR.

(Reprinted from DANCE NEWS, London, England)

ballerina at 21:

a dancer's dream come true

SVETLANA BERIOSOVA

. . . at 21 SVETLANA BERIOSOVA heard the Royal Opera House cheer her for curtain after curtain — and acclaim her *ballerina* . . . . . .

by PETER CRAIG-RAYMOND

"I don't care whether they call me prima ballerina or not," Svetlana Beriosova said on the day after her first appearance in the classic SLEEPING BEAUTY.

Why should she care? She had proven to the world that she was a ballerina — the title, when it came, would merely seem a belated acknowledgement.

The rich dancer — or the one who does not go through the starving-for-my-art phase — is sometimes thought to have her career easily. Not of necessity. There are heartbreaks just as hard to take as having an empty pocket. Svetlana has known a few.

But she is more than a dancer. She is what we in the theatre call a trouper — her whole family background is theatrical. Heading it, more often than not by long distance telephone, is Nicholas Beriosoff.

Svetlana's story, then, must start with Nicholas — or "papa" as he is known to hundreds of dancers as well as to his daughter. Papa is artistic aide to the Festival Ballet which is now touring the United States, following in the footsteps of Sadler's Wells.

When Beriosoff became a real "papa" the year was 1932, the place Lithuania. At that time Nicholas was with the National Lithuanian Ballet. Between then and 1939 the Beriosoff family travelled all over Europe — Dancing. Ask Svetlana today to answer a direct question — which choreographer does she like working under . . . which role would she like to dance . . . and your answer will be: "I just like — dancing."

SVETLANA BERIOSOVA

Not until she was eight did Svetlana have a dance lesson. In the United States where she became resident at the end of 1939 she began to study. By 1947 she was in France, dancing with the ballet of the irrepressible, party-throwing Marquis de Cuevas. For eight months she shared Monte Carlo with the sun, and the ballet. And she still loves Monte Carlo as most people have come to do.

While she worked with the Marquis, an offer came from England: would she join the new Metropolitan Ballet. She cabled back a rapidly decided answer: "yes".

With this ill-starred company (no money) she found her place in dancing and created a role in John Tara's DESIGN FOR STRINGS. A London season . . . month after month touring around the towns of England . . . then abroad . . . but it had to end. Ballet was not then a paying entertainment.

Two years later Svetlana came to the junior Sadler's Wells company — the Theatre Ballet. Here she danced the Swan Queen in LAC DES CYGNE immediately and in most of the other ballets in the repertoire you could see Beriosova. Her fondest memory of the junior Wells? FETE ESTRANGE — a haunting, lovely little ballet.

From the Theatre Ballet she — at last — graduated to Covent Garden. Again she made her first apeparance in an important role: the Lilac Fairy in LAC DES CYGNE. She had only two days to prepare the role, and this was only the second time she had danced in a full evening ballet. (She had danced Swanhilda in COPPELIA a year or so earlier if my memory is correct.)

That her performance pleased soon became proven. Ballet after ballet came to have a role for Beriosova in it — BALLET IMPERIAL by America's George Balanchine . . . Ashton's Coronation glide, HOMAGE TO THE QUEEN . . . the Favorite role created for Violetta Elvin in VENEZIANA — and then a first role created for her. This was THE SHADOW. Again a frail, delicate, haunting ballet of greys and whites.

Last month she danced for the first time the Princess in FIREBIRD. This ballet by Igor Strawinski is one of the great classics of our time. Created for the Diaghilev company, it has lived in performances by most of our finest dancers. And now: Beriosova.

The details of the story are here, the 21-year-old personality which makes them interesting is not so easy to set in print. Dancers are the most difficult pepole in the world to meet. Very few can make a conversation outside of their work-partnerships. Only Violetta Elvin is, in my experience, an easy conversationalist and a brilliant dancer.

SVETLANA BERIOSOVA AND MICHAEL SOMES IN SADLER'S WELLS' REVIVAL OF 'THE FIREBIRD'.

—Robert Harper

Dancers tend to agree or slightly demur. They rarely launch into replies lasting a full sentence. "Yes" . . . "No" . . . "Perhaps". And no more. To try braking this I dropped in on Svetlana on a very wet, English summer evening. A cool, calm, Beriosova answered my ring at the door of her west London flat. "Oh, there's a dinner party watching television in the lounge — can I get you coffee in the kitchen?"

I had just come from meeting Vera Zorina at Claridges, so a cup of kitchen coffee was a not unwelcome break. Head waiters are so incredibly "right" — it still strains me to be in their presence after years of dealing with them!

Over coffee we discussed the ballets she had danced, the choreographers she had worked under. Frank Staff "so dramatic" . . . Andree Howard "saw right through to what I could do rather than just repeating what I had done already in the past" . . . Frederick Ashton "so sure of the **chic** of dancing" . . . and John Cranko. That was a full-length subject. Svetlana earnestly admires Cranko's work. I would count myself an admirer, but perhaps "earnestly" would not be my adjective as yet.

Future? "I never think of it. The unexpected so often happens. I don't even plan ahead." Papa plans. Press stories, photographs which have appeared in magazines — artists usually chain such records to themselves. Svetlana's? "Oh, in a trunk. Mother pastes them in a book sometimes, papa keeps them." Much more definite on her photographs, she knows exactly what she must look like. "Not so much for myself" — I grinned — "but the public gets used to seeing you in certain ways and they come to expect only photographs showing these."

There, of course, she is quite right.

But if Svetlana has no future plans, others may be taking the burden. At least one important London management is seriously thinking of

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ANTON DOLIN

Following is an informal interview with Anton Dolin, the internationally famous dancer-choreographer, which took place backstage at the San Francisco Opera House, December 8, 1954, where the London Festival Ballet, on its first American tour, was appearing.

Q. When was the Festival Ballet founded, Mr. Dolin?

A. It was founded five years ago and was the result of an English tour that I made with a very small group of dancers, ten girls and four boys that were, you might say, our surrounding background. When we finished this particular tour I felt that there was a place for another English company, so together with Dr. Braunsweg we founded the London Festival Ballet.

Q. You are the Artistic Director for the company, are you not?

A. Yes. I've been Artistic Director of this company from its very inception.

Q. I would say the Festival Ballet has become somewhat of a showcase for many great and near-great dancers, is that right, Mr. Dolin?

A. You are quite right. From the very beginning I wasn't sure just how long it would be before we would have the opportunity of going to the great Capitols of Europe, let alone coming here to America. I decided nothing could be better than for the young artists in the company to have an opportunity of seeing these world renowned artists, all of whom are not only world renowned, but are my very good friends as well. The very first great ballerinas that I invited were Alexandra Danilova, Mia Slavenska, the great French ballerina, Yvette Chauvire, and Madame Toumanova who came for the first time with us three years ago and again last summer before coming here to America.

Q. Is this Festival Ballet's first American tour?

A. It's first American tour, but not the first time over on this continent. At the invitation of the Canadian government, during the time of the Coronation of Her Majesty, the Queen, the Festival Ballet appeared in Toronto and Montreal for two weeks.

Q. So far, how have you found the reception on this tour?

A. We've had a wonderful reception all the way through the tour, except perhaps for Chicago where that famous and obviously anti-British — shall we say — person, Miss Claudia Cassidy, whom I think should give up writing, decided that

ANTON DOLIN AND
TAMARA TOUMANOVA

—Bill Cogan

she did not like the company and certainly did her best to ruin it. However, after one or two days of having read the nonsenses and stupidities that she wrote, the company, not being used to this type of criticism, finally realized that this was a biased, prejudiced, criticism and obviously came from a rather sick mind. But apart from her, reviews have been wonderful. And we're very grateful.

Q. While we're on the subject of critics, Mr. Dolin, what is your personal opinion of them in general?

A. I have the greatest respect in the world for critics. I have no respect for those that destroy something that one has tried to build up after many, many years of hard work. A critic obviously has to come in, and should give, I think, an unbiased opinion and not a personal one.

Q. Would you say that critics of the general press understand enough about the technique of dancing and the problems confronting the choreographer to be able to write intelligently on the subject?

A. Yes, I do. I think we have some very fine critics. We have two or three very brilliant critics in New York. They write well and nine times out of ten I think their criticisms are constructive. Here in San Francisco, where I have appeared many times, you have writers who know ballet through having watched it, studied and, I think, loved it over a great many years. The trouble is there are some critics who come to the ballet who don't really like it — therefore, it's awfully hard for them to write anything good about it.

Q. What would you say is the main difference, if any, between the American and British critics?

A. Well, I think the American critic looks at the ballet in a slightly different way. We in England have had so much

☞

more ballet there. Here, I would say, it has been only in the past ten or at the most, fifteen years, that you have really seen regular yearly ballet companies, whereas we in England have seen not only one, but many ballet companies over the last thirty years.

Q. How does Festival Ballet go about selecting its corps de ballet, as well as its guest dancers?

A. We engage our dancers by the year, six months with a six-month option. Every season we generally play for three months at the Royal Festival Hall. I devote two or three days during that time to auditioning new dancers. There are always one or two that have to be replaced. Perhaps somebody leaves, or goes home to visit. You see, we have dancers from all over the commonwealth of Europe, New Zealand, Autsralia, South Africa, as well as from England.

Q. Wasn't it in 1935 that you founded, with Alicia Markova, the Markova-Dolin Company?

A. That's correct. We toured from 1935, '36, and '37 all over England. Twice a year we had London seasons. I think I can truthfully say that we were the pioneers of ballet in England, Scotland, Ireland and Wales during that time.

Q. How long was the Markova-Dolin company active?

A. Exactly two years.

Q. Do you recall a painter by the name of Tretchikoff who asked to do a portrait of you and Alicia Markova while you were on tour in South Africa?

A. Yes. He did several paintings. He did a very wonderful painting of Markova in the Dying Swan. In fact, I used it for the color cover of the book that I wrote on Markova, the English edition, which, incidentally, I much prefer to the American one which I did not like. It was badly cut. If anybody is really interested in reading the life story of Markova, I advise them to ask for the English edition. The photographs in the American edition were badly chosen. Unfortunately, I couldn't be in New York at the time. It far from satisfied me when I finally saw it.

Q. When did you last dance in America?

A. In 1948. I was here in San Francisco the latter part of January.

Q. My reason for asking is that I'm curious to know if you have found Americans, in general, more interested in ballet today, than they were when you were here last?

A. No, I wouldn't say they are more interested, but they are definitely not less interested.

Q. Going back to your early years, would you tell us at what age you started studying dancing?

A. I started dancing when I was ten years of age. I decided I wanted to go on the stage. I began my career as a kid actor and dancing was part of my lessons. I learned acting and singing, as well as tap and ballet dancing. After four or five years of playing in children's plays, "Peter Pan", "Where the Rain-

bow Ends", both children's plays, and Shakespeare, I decided at the age of sixteen, when I could no longer go on playing small boys' parts — shall we say — to take up dancing quite seriously — which I did. I was lucky at a very young age to become a member, a very minor member, of the Diaghilev Ballet.

Q. At what age do you think it best to start boys in ballet?

A. I would say around about the age of ten, eleven or twelve. It depends very much on the physical side of the person. Some boys and girls, too, are very much more developed at the age of ten than others are at fourteen or fifteen. I'd say on an average of around ten years of age.

[TO BE CONCLUDED NEXT MONTH]

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san francisco DANCE DATE by j marks

At this turning of the year in San Francisco, the prediction is that of a phenomenally fine dance season. This premise of achievement is something a vast number of persons in this city-by-the-bay have been striving toward with considerable plans and efforts. The profusion of dance performances set for 1955 have been announced by some of this area's leading dance companies as well as by a number of new groups which have recently come into existence.

From the repertories of the San Francisco Ballet and Halprin-Lathrop Company we can expect an even greater variety of productions than before. There will also be performances of works created by such new companies as the Carrousel Dancers, The Contemporary Dancers, the Ballet Company of the Academy of Ballet, as well as from some of the older groups such as Ballet Celeste , Peters-Wright Dance Theatre and the Sergi Temoff Group.

The accent will fall upon the new and youthful with the artistic and organizational energies of company directors aiming toward the creation of a fundamental spirit of dance on the West Coast.

The plan which animates these groups new and old alike, is the discovery and establishment of a theatre of dance in which independent choreographers will have ample opportunity to present their works.

COMING EVENTS

From the Academy of Ballet comes word of a new ballet company under the directorship of Guillermo del Oro and Carolyn Parks which will begin performances in February. . . .The Contemporary Dancers whose solo artists include James Crosshaw, Valarie Wimer, Glena Shaw, Zack Thomson, Frank Garcia and Donna Kollmann, have begun work on a dance-drama based on the powerful 'O' Neill drama 'Desire Under the Elms'. This group premiered 'Concerto Grosso' last month in San Leandro, California. . . . . The new Carrousel Dancers, organized as a subsidiary group of the Halprin-Lathrop School. plan a season of original works to be performed for the Bay Area dance-cooperatives. . . . San Francisco Ballet's Artistic Director, James Graham-Lujan, announced that a new ballet with choreography by Lew Christensen and music by Mozart (Divertimento for Oboe and Strings) has been commissioned by the Ojai Festival and is titled 'The Instruction of the Noble Savage'. . . . Ballet Celeste is preparing itself for the corps de ballet work in the Pacific Opera Company's production of 'Hansel and Gretle'. . . . Carol Beals continues her work as ballet mistress of the Gingold Children's Opera.

MISCELLANY

Congratulations are in order for a job well done by the San Francisco Dance League, an organization long known for its agenda of events aimed at the cultivation of dance in our area. On Dec. 18, the League sponsored a program of dance by the outstanding contemporary soloist, Jean Erdman, at the Marines Memorial Theatre in this city. An artist with magnificent finesse, provocative beauty and an almost masculine power, Jean Erdman demonstrated beyond all other qualities her keen, meticulous sense of dance theater. Following her performance, Miss Erdman, who is also director of Modern dance at New York's Bard College, consulted with candidates for college scholarships which this institution offers to qualifying dancers who wish to further their study of dance as as an art form.

. . . . Mariam van Tuyl, scholar of the dance, has supplemented her editorial position on the little magazine of the dance, IMPULSE, with the job as San Francisco correspondent for Lydia Joel's DANCE magazine.

. . . . The Reno Ballet Guild and the University of Oregon have invited Miss

(page 37)

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starring Beriosova in a concert ballet all over Britain. Alicia Markova has popularized such ballet, Violetta Elvin has succeeded in it. Why not Svetlana? Why not, indeed.

Earlier this year she gave the performance which brought all this to a head — and made her a subject for HEIRESS. Her first Princess Aurora in THE SLEEPING BEAUTY had the huge audience at Covent Garden cheering as I have rarely heard them cheer before. The next day the question was "Why is she not yet a ballerina?" That headline I quoted at the beginning of this article was a typical one. In fact, it misquoted Svetlana — but its point was made.

A hundred times a month I am asked "Who will replace Fonteyn?" The answer: who could? But after Fonteyn, Svetlana Beriosova is one of the few dancers to merit words such as these:

"From the moment Svetlana Beriosova walked onto the Covent Garden stage for her first Aurora, the performance was brilliant. She pulled a dowdy, dragging, dull production up to the heights, and the audience with her. I have rarely seen such an Aurora.

"She was young, she was glowing, she was all but perfect in this superb SLEEPING BEAUTY.

"Here was the Aurora which makes the critic's job worth doing — the performance that pulls a strained aesthetic digestion out of its lethargy and gives it hands to clap and voice to cheer.

"The house first warmed, then thrust towards her with a wonderful sound of reaction."

Will she become a ballerina? She is a ballerina. Will she be important to English ballet. She is now — no one more so. At twenty-one Svetlana has achieved a dancer's dream, a superb Aurora, and the prestige that goes with having critics ready to dine in the kitchen just for the sake of being able to say later: "I knew Beriosova. I knew what she was to become."

The critinc is no prophet, but if he is any good he gambles upon his opinions. I think I have made mine pretty definite.

Svetlana?

I left her in the kitchen, with a party of eight to feed. And still cool . . . still calm . . . still the ballerina of collected assurance.

Leslie Caron once told me, "Peter, I'm always lucky." Not so Svetlana. She has been sometimes unlucky. But she could have told me "I'll get there." Except she was too busy thinking of the eight appetites in the next room.

So I will tell her. Yes, you'll get there. And soon. ●

These dancing canines, Snowy and Hoky trip the light fantastic for the Harringay Circus of London.

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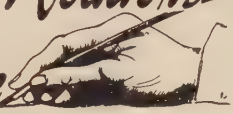

Despite the fact that people in the dance profession have very little 'spare' time, the editors have received many UNSOLICITED *letters in which the writers express their feelings regarding the* DANCING STAR *as a magazine. Following are a few excerpts from these letters.*

Editor:

It is a pleasure to tell you that I enjoyed your Christmas Greetings in the Dec. Dancing Star. It's interesting to know something of the magazine. It is the best issue I have had and contains fine, world-wide and interesting news for those who love ballet.

Also, I would like you to read the following to Rod Quiros on Festival Ballet. If you will forward this to him, I hope that my experiences might make for looking at Festival Ballet from a different point of view.

Never having heard of them, but liking Ballet, I went to see this company their first year at the Stoll Theatre in London. Since then I have seen them in London in 1952-3 & 4, and in Canada last year and this. Always with increasing interest and enjoyment. Mr. Quiros' article is all too short to more than touch on the work and ambitions of Festival Ballet.

At first sight, in 1951, when I went especially to see 'Specter of the Rose', knowing nothing of Festival Ballet or of their dancers, when John Gilpin leaped through the window onto the stage, I almost leaped from my seat in excitement. Never in Sadler's Wells, N.Y.City Ballet Theatre or Rambert have I seen such evident love of the dance as he and all this company put over.

Since then, through the original graciousness of John Gilpin to an admiring fan, I have come to know many of the company. They are young, good looking and beautiful dancers, compared to all the other companies I have ever seen. I cannot contend that all their productions are done or staged to perfection, but they exist without being subsidized by the British government.

Aside from this they are a foreign company, struggling for the greatest things in art, which to me, means Ballet. I thought that Claudia Cassidy's bitter thrusts and ridicule in the Chicago Times, were in bad taste, bad politics and showed an utter lack of being able to distinguish the beautiful, shining through mistakes and production errors. Mr. Quiros is nothing like that and gives some praise, but grudgingly in sound. There seems to me so much to praise and discuss in Festival Ballet that would be of general help both to the artists and the reading public.

I know the Gilpin family quite well. You may be interested, at least I hope so, to know John Gilpin and his limitations you must also know his Mother. A most charming and bashful lady, and John exactly like her in looks and temperament. He loves dancing above all things and before I knew him it came across the footlights. But he is modest and doesn't push himself. To me, the spark of Festival Ballet and a star al-

ready.

You mention very few in your all too short article. So many of the lesser-known dancers are so very good—Anita Landa, Dapghne Dale, Louis Godfrey—in fact most of them.

Sincerely,
Hugh Bonnell
Youngstown, Ohio.

Editor:

Please renew my subscription to Dancing Star for another year. I enjoy the magazine very much. Although I've had to stop teaching because of a nervous break-down, I still want the magazine to come each month.

Sincerely,
Mrs. Mildred Kendall
Newport, Vermont

(The Editors wish Mrs. Kendall a speedy recovery.)

Editors:

Just a note to say that Dancing Star magazine is delightful. That's the reason for having it sent to my Beauty Salon. My customers enjoy it.

Sincerely,
Mrs. Maria Monzella.
Berkeley, Calif.

PS: Be sure to give Mason-Kahn credit for my renewal.

Editor:

Congratulations on your London Editor. I read several English dance publications each month. What a sophisticated audience the continent is for ballet! How long will it take for that to come about in this country?

One of my pupils, Marilyn Winans, arrived in London to begin training with Ruth French (R.A.D.). Incidentally, she lived in Redding and traveled to my classes four times a week—one hundred and forty miles each round trip. Traveling with Marilyn is Philip Jackson, one of my former pupils who has studied this past year with Olga Ziceva. Phil will be studying at the Sadler's Wells school, where he has been accepted for a year.

By the way, it's gratifying to watch Dancing Star magazine growing. Keep up the good work.

Sincerely,
Leigh Shannon
Chico, Calif.

PS: Would you be interested in having Marilyn write something for Dancing Star relative to her English trip?

(EDITORS'NOTE: We certainly would.)

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KAY FAULCONER

Ballerina's Life

Tiny Lilian Alicia Marks—now better known to the world as Alicia Markova—made her first professional stage appearance as a première danseuse at the age of 10 in the pantomime "Dick Whittington," presented during the Christmas holidays in 1920 at the Kennington Theater in South London. Billed as "Little Alicia—the child Pavlova," she captured both her audience and the critics, a feat which has become habitual with her through the years. For Little Miss Marks grew up to be one of the world's greatest prima ballerinas.

Sitting in the Kennington audience for "Little Alicia's" debut was a 16-year-old dancer named Patrick Kay. He was enthralled, and sent the child a bouquet of white chrysanthemums. Bouquets to Alicia have since become habitual for Pat, who soon after changed his name to Anton Dolin.* He became her big brother, adviser, and dancing partner. Dolin's latest bouquet to Alicia is his recent biography—"Alicia Markova, Her Life and Art."† Dolin, the writer, has presented his partner and friend as effectively in words as Dolin, the dancer, has shown her off on the stage.

Lilian Alicia Marks, aged about 9

Dolin met Markova for the first time at Princess Seraphine Astafieva's ballet classes in London. Previously, dancing had been more or less of a therapy in the life of Alicia. She had always liked to dance and give home entertainments with her three sisters, but a tendency toward a tricky left knee caused her doctor to prescribe dancing to strengthen the weak leg. (The child was also knock-kneed and flat-footed.)

Talent: Regardless of her handicaps, there was never any question about Alicia's talent for dancing. By the time she was 14, she had been engaged by the great international ballet impresario Serge Pavlovich Diaghileff. He changed her name to Markova, and she quickly nicknamed him Sergypop. She was a quiet, introspective, and extraordinarily sensitive child, with an affinity for cats and chocolates. She worked incessantly, and would have been a full-fledged star at 19, but Diaghileff died in 1929, and his great ballet collapsed.

Markova became the big drawing card of the newly formed Sadler's Wells Ballet. Established as the first ballerina in England, Markova embarked on her American career in 1938, first with the Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo and later with Ballet Theatre. And it was in the United States that Markova came into her own. Her performance of "Giselle"—the "Hamlet" of ballerinas—has become the yardstick against which every other ballerina's performance is measured.

Markova is also unique in her interpretation of Pavlova's immortal "The Dying Swan" (see cut). As a small child,

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Gilbert Adams

Markova as "The Dying Swan"

he saw Pavlova on the stage, and even anced for her in a private audition. But ever once did she see the great Russian erform "The Dying Swan." Yet since avlova's death, the role has become delibly associated with Markova.

*In the era of the Diaghileff Ballet, it was customary for English dancers to Russianize their names.

†Hermitage. 319 pages. $3.95.

(Reprinted from Newsweek)

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biographical brief

Aubrey Haines, author of 'The Lester Horton Dance Story' writes: 'After seventeen years as a wholesaler of walnut meats here in the Southland, during which I wrote part-time, I became a full-time free lance writer a year ago last April. I write articles only on assignment, and my pieces have appeared in Atlantic Monthly, Nation, Tomorrow, Writer and many others.

Ed. Note: Mr. Haines' last article for Dancing Star appeared in the April '54 issue and was titled 'Sadler's Wells Iron Man'.

DANCING: AN INTERNATIONAL INTRODUCTION

From the Minuet, of the Eighteenth Century, to the Rhumba, of today, dancing is the one activity that has survived wars and social changes.

It has often been said that music is the international language, if so, then dancing could be called the international introduction. Language barrier and political differences do not enter into social dancing.

Dancing has played an important role in the history books of the world. From the War Dances of the early African tribes to the Polkas of Germany and the Minuets of the early Eighteenth Century in the ballrooms of America, as well as the lively Jigs and Reels of Ireland, they have all been plainly written into the history of the world. And in our day the Dance Marathons of the roaring Twenties, the Big Apple and the Shag of the 1930's and the Rhumba, Mambo and Fox Trot of today, have all found their mark in our present day living.

Though our great grand parents danced to the Minuet and we today dance to the music of the Fox Trot and Rhumba, we are still dancing for the same reasons — FUN, RELAXATION and SOCIAL GRACE.

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RUSS SAUNDERS and partner demonstrate a 'foot-to-foot' climb for the total beginner. For an interesting item and photos re: Mr. Saunders see April and May 1953 issues of Dancing Star magazine.

—Photos are by Dancers International—

Dance Lines

by

Gordon Keith

HAPPY NEW YEAR!

And many thanks for helping to make Dancing Star magazine (now in its 5th year) one of America's fastest growing dance publications. . . .

We've said it before, and we say it again. This is your publication, so feel free to mail us the interesting dance news, photos and events of your school association, student or professional activities. . . . Remember—good publicity helps you get to the top. . . . and it also helps to KEEP YOU THERE! Perhaps you can't afford to hire a press agent, but certainly you can help your own cause by taking an active part in the exploitation of your activities. . . .

Right about here we'd like to sneak in a commercial if you'll just bear with us for about ten seconds.

If your dance teachers' organization isn't advertising in Dancing Star magazine—it's missing a GOOD THING! . . . . So why not call your secretary's attention to this fact. . . . We'll appreciate this gesture on your part. After all, it's not only an excellent means of keeping your organization's name before the eyes of the dance world—it's also an inexpensive way to bring in NEW MEMBERS. (end of commercial).

A PERSONAL RECOMMENDATION

We'd like to personally recommend a currently popular motion picture. It's one that we enjoyed immensely—and one think you, too, will enjoy. 'Deep In My Heart' (an apt title, we thought) contains just the proper amount of seasoning (singing, dancing and schmaltz) to make it a very tasty musical.

Some of the guest star dancers who are bound to set your toes a-tapping are: Gene and Fred Kelly, Ann Miller, Cyd Charisse and Tamara Toumanova, who makes quite a departure from her generally classic style.

The thing that prompted us to catch an early showing of this fine musical (aside from its top-flight cast) was an interview we listened in on in which Jose Ferrer said: 'I usually see my own pictures just once. 'Deep In My Heart' I've already seen seven times.'

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DANCE MASTERS of CALIFORNIA held its first Annual Benefit Christmas Dance Dec. 5th at the Bellevue Hotel in San Francisco. The regular monthly meeting preceded the special affair. Purpose of the Buffet Supper and Dance was to aid in building the association's reserve Benefit Fund project. Music was furnished by Joe Brigandi's Orchestra and 'fun prizes' were offered for the winners of the Waltz, Tango and Foxtrot contests.

ASSOCIATED DANCE TEACHERS of SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA held their Annual Christmas Party at the Statler Hotel, Dec. 12th, in Los Angeles. Exchange gifts (not over one dollar) were a feature of the party. A special Ballroom session was held in which different teachers taught their favorite novelty steps. Honored guests included: Jessie Ratliff, Ernest Belcher, Margit Tarasoff, Ruth St. Denis, Louis Da Pron and Hal Belfer. Movies of professional dances from pictures and TV were shown.

NATIONAL SMOOTH DANCERS (Golden Gate Chapter) held their Christmas party at the Hotel Alameda, Dec. 19th, in Alameda. This was a joint affair with the Lake Merritt Chapter of Oakland. A New Year's party and dance is scheduled at the Genova Hall in San Francisco.

DANCE MASTERS of MICHIGAN held their regular meeting Dec. 5th at Hotel Pfister in Milwaukee. Instructors for the day were: Shirley Van, Swing Character, Jack Wolfram, Tap; Jean Binks, Ballet; Harold Piller, Character; June Rold, Children; Vesper Chamberlain, Toe; Edna Christensen, Ballroom Forum.

CECCHETTI COUNCIL of AMERICA has elected the following officers for 1955: Theodore Smith, President; Leona Lucas, 1st V.P.; Gertrude Edwards Jory, 2nd V.P.; Jack Bickle, Recording Secretary; Marjorie Hassard, Corresponding Secretary; Caryl Miller, Treasurer, and Enid Ricardeau, Registrar. Board of Trustees; Sylvia Hamer, Virgiline Simmons, Olga Fricker and Phyllis Petersen Thorne. General Board Member Chairman, Chula Morrow. Newly elected general board members: Irene Mortenson, Lera Rae and Virginia Garrett Kelley.

NATIONAL SMOOTH DANCERS (Lake Merritt Chapter) held its Annual Holiday Benefit Dance at Sweet's Ballroom in Oakland, Calif., Dec. 8th. Music was by the Jack Fina Orchestra. A floorshow, highlighted by the precision Tango team from the Golden Gate Chapter, made their initial appearance. The dance was choreographed by Jeff Jefferies. The ballroom was donated for this charity event by Eugene Sweet, and half the proceeds ($217.) was presented to the Oak Knoll Hospital Entertainment Fund.

Newly elected officers include: Elmer F. Blankenship, President and Francis Smith, Treasurer.

ST. LOUIS DANCING TEACHERS ASSOCIATION had Ken Davis of Chicago give a two-hour course in American Jazz to both teachers and advanced students at their December meeting. Following the lesson an election of officers was held. 1954 officers who were reinstated were: Minette Buchmann, President; La Vergne Blisner; Vice President; Marilyn Baumann, Secretary and Irma Vahlkamp, Treasurer. Board of Directors are: Carmen Thomas, Macklyn Williams and Loretto Amend.

Patricia Perry, teacher at the Phil Osterhouse Dance Studio in Grand Rapids, Mich., poses before a group of students and teachers during the Oct. 24th meeting of the Dance Masters of America which was held at the Osterhouse studio. Miss Perry was one of the faculty members. Attendance for the day came close to the one-hundred mark—with many teachers coming from as far away as one hundred and fifty miles.

More than fifty students from the Lera Rae Dance Studios of Dayton, Ohio, went to see 'Ballet Theatre' during the month of November. For many, it was their first time to see a professional ballet. Above are just a few of the Lera Rae acrobatic students who performed in Miss Rae's recent production of 'The Happy Prince'.

—Daytona Studio

Kay Sharp, 17 year-old student at the Emilie Bearden School of Ballet in Warwick, Va., has won numerous honors with her dancing. Aside from appearing on a number of TV shows, Miss Sharp won the leading role in the 1954 production of 'The Common Glory' She also danced in the Newport News Junior Women's Club Follies' as well as in the Opera, 'Martha'.

Evidence that Body-Building and Acrobatics are beneficial to health is shown in the case of Marie Gandee. At the age of six months, Marie was stricken with both a rupture and a heart murmur. When she was only one year of age, the doctor advised that a truss be worn, since an operation at such a tender age would be risky. Upon recommendation from her physician, at the age of six, Marie was given leg exercises to help strengthen the abdominal muscles. Later, body-building exercises and acrobatics were added. Within a year her heart murmur had disappeared and the rupture had improved to the point where she was able to start acrobatic tricks. Today, at the age of 12, Marie is enjoying excellent health. She now performs contortion, aerial and advanced acrobatic tricks. She has appeared on TV, winning 1st prize on the KTTV Helbros Wrist Watch program. Marie's dance studies include Acrobatics, Ballet and Ballroom. She is a pupil of the Baker Dance Studios in Montebello, Calif.

●

SYMPHONY-BALLET CONCERT

The California Youth Symphony and the Ziceva Ballet School of San Mateo, California have combined to present another 'Symphony Ballet Concert on Feb. 26 at 8:15 PM and Feb. 27 at 3 PM at the San Mateo High School auditorium in San Mateo.

The Ziceva school will present 'Pas De Quatre' with choreography by Jules Perrot and music by Cesare Pugni, 'Village Festival' with choreography by Olga Ziceva from Rimsky-Korsakov's Snow Maiden, and 'Masquerade' choreographed to the overture of Thomas' opera Mignon.

Some fifty advanced students will take part in this outstanding production.

Rosemary Harrison, student of Eva Varady, will dance the lead in the 'Children's Theatre Guild's' ballet, 'Cinderella', with original choreography by Miss Varady.

STUDIO NOTES ° ° ° °

° ° ° The Academy of Ballet in San Francisco engaged guest teachers, Anton Dolin and John Gilpin of 'Festival Ballet' to teach special classes Dec. 8,10,11. A record attendance turned out.

The following dance studios were recently represented with community shows:

° ° ° Yvonne School of Dancing 'Rhythm Revue of 1954', Berkeley Little Theatre, Nov. 14th.

° ° ° Bev-El Studios 'Rhythm Review', Paris Theatre, Nov. 21st., Oakland, Calif.

° ° ° Maggie's Dance Studio 'Dance Revue of 1954', Hayward High Auditorium.

• **DANCE TEACHERS — *PLEASE NOTE*** •
You are welcome to send **NEWS** and **PHOTOGRAPHS** of yourself and your students to these pages. All material will be considered for publication, but none can be acknowledged or returned. **PHOTOS** should be **CLEAR** and **GLOSSY**. Mail to: **STUDIO EVENTS, % DANCING STAR, 376 Almaden Ave., San Jose, California.**

This juvenile brother and sister team, Maureen and John O'Leary, commute weekly from Washington, D.C. to New York City, where they study Tap, Ballet and Modern Jazz under the personal supervision of Jack Stanly. The team has twice won on Paul Whiteman's T.V. Teen Club; they appeared on the Ted Mack Amatuer Hour, won on Your Junior Revue' W.N.B.W., Washington, D.C. and wonthe Talent Contest at the Penn Theatre in Washington, D.C., to mention only a few of their prize-winning activities.

—Boris Bakchy—

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Pictured here are students of Millers School of the Dance in Dushore, Pa. Left to right: Ronald Chaffee, Grover Powell, Leon Powell and John Saxe. Back row: Roberta Saxe Linda Chaffee, Anna Mae Powell and Marie Powell.

BABY BATON

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(continued from last month.)

MEAS.	COUNT	TERM
		STEP THREE
17	1,2	Kick R knee up front and hit baton (hands apart on baton)
	3,4	Step R together
18	5-8	Reverse Meas. 17
19	1,2	March R fwd (twist baton R)
	3,4	March L fwd (twist baton L)
20	5-8	Repeat Meas. 19 (twist baton R then L) *(On Meas. 19,20, twist baton, still keeping hands apart)*
21,22	1-8	Repeat Meas. 17,18
23,24	1-8	Repeat Meas. 19,20, marching back.
		STEP FOUR
25	1-4	Jump feet apart, baton over head
26	5-8	Jump feet together, baton down in front of legs
27,28	1-8	Repeat Meas. 25,26
29	1,2	March R (twist baton R)
	3,4	March L (twist baton L)
30	5-8	Repeat Meas. 29 *(Meas. 29,30, done as a R turn in place, end facing front)*
31	1-4	Jump feet apart, baton over head
32	5,6	Jump feet together, baton in front of legs
	7,8	Jump feet apart, baton over head (hold as finish pose)

THE END

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ED SULLIVAN WINNER PRESENTS CONCERT

Richard L. Armbrust, baritone, and recent winner of the All-Army Contest held on Toast of the Town TV Show, presented a full evening concert Jan. 19th at the Hogan Junior High School in Vallejo, Calif. A reception was held at the Lodena Edgcumbe School of the Dance, 1115 Amador St. in Vallejo, to which members of the Dance Masters of California were invited.

NOTICE

BROADWAY DANCE BEAT did not appear this month due to the illness of David Raher.

SAN FRANCISCO DANCE DATE
(from page 18)

Van Tuyl as guest lecturer.

. . . . The San Francisco Dance League has announced tentative plans for a guest class to be conducted by Haitian dancer, Jean Leon Destine, when he arrives here for his performance in the Spencer Barefoot 'Celebrities Concerts'.

. . . . June Anne Lane, president of Dance Theatre Incorporated, has invited this writer to act as a member of a panel discussing the problems of dance theatre on the West Coast. This newly founded organization of Santa Barbara, California is concerned with activating, through cooperation, the communities of the West and of sponsoring regional, as well as Eastern, dance groups in tours of coast cities. ■

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BY JAMES A. ROZANAS

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ROUNDOFF BACK (Whipback)

From a running start, do a roundoff and as the feet are snapped down close to the hands, with the arms coming up from the floor forward. Straighten the legs and spring up from the floor, swinging the arms upward and throwing the head back and arching the back. Continue on over, landing on the floor with knees slightly bent and arms overhead. Land on the balls of the feet and spring up off the floor at the finish. Be sure that the feet are brought down close to the hands in the roundoff. The whipback is similar to a high flip-flop without landing on the hands.

ROUNDOFF FLIP-FLOP BACK

From a running start, do a roundoff flip-flop and as the feet come down to the floor from the flip-flop, straighten the knees and spring upward, arms reaching upward to the ceiling, throwing the head back and arching the back. Continue on over and finish as in a regular roundoff back. The pupil may do the roundoff flip-flop and finish with a tuck back. However, it is best to learn both the tuck back and the whipback.

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